Understanding the
Housing Choice Voucher Program

The HCV Program is income-based and is designed to provide rental assistance to eligible, very low income families and low income families. The HCV program is a voluntary program, and any rental unit located in Boyd County, Kentucky has the potential to be included. Units must meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Housing Quality Standards (HQS) as well as the City of Ashland's Property Maintenance Code. The owners / landlords must enter into a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with the City of Ashland Assisted Housing. In the HCV program, the tenant and the Assisted Housing office pay their respective portions of the rent directly to the owner. Program participants are selected from a waiting list and must be income eligible. It is at the owner's discretion to check references and screen tenants to determine suitability.

One Strike / Zero Tolerance

The City of Ashland Assisted Housing enforces a "One Strike" or "Zero Tolerance" Policy with respect to these types of serious violations:

1) Drug related or violent criminal activity on or off the rented property by program participants, household members or guests. Drug related criminal activity shall mean the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, use or possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use of a controlled substance. Alcohol abuse which interferes with health, safety, or peaceful enjoyment of the property by persons residing in the immediate vicinity.

2) Activity that threatens the health, safety, or peaceful enjoyment of any persons residing in the immediate vicinity.

3) The City of Ashland will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests and / or convictions of household members related to drug-related or violent criminal activity, and any eviction notice to evict based on drug related or criminal activity.

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Ashland
A Proud Past, A Bright Future

Housing Choice
Voucher (HCV)

Basic Information Guide

for

Landlords and Tenants

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
LANDLORD AND TENANT INFORMATION

Responsibilities of the Owner

Rental property owners participating in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program deal directly with the tenant. Units must be maintained in accordance with HUD housing standards and city Property Maintenance Code. An initial inspection of the unit must verify the unit meets HQS, local and state sanitary codes before a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract can be executed.

Owners must:

- Maintain their units according to HQS, local and state regulations.
- Adhere to HUD requirements of non-discrimination regulations
- Fulfill their obligations under the terms of the lease signed by them and the tenant.
- HAP to the owner will be abated for non-compliance of inspection regulations.
- Notify the Housing office of any intention to evict the tenant. It is the owner's responsibility to evict tenants if lease violations occur.
- Collect the security deposit and the tenant's share of the monthly rent.
- Not collect any monies in excess of the contract rent or amenity fees as stated in the lease.

By accepting the HAP payment each month, the owner is certifying that:

- Full payment has been received; the amount of the payment is correct and the payment meets all contract requirements.
- The unit is currently in a decent, safe and sanitary condition and in compliance with the HAP contract.
- The unit is currently occupied by the eligible family that has been approved by the Assisted Housing office.

Responsibilities of the Tenant

The family shall be responsible for fulfilling all obligations as a participant on the HCV program and will abide by the written agreement (lease) entered into with the owner.

The family must:

- Notify the City of Ashland Assisted Housing office, in writing, of any changes in family size, household income or criminal activity within ten (10) days. Failure to report these changes may result in termination of rental assistance.
- Not engage in any drug related or criminal activity. Any such activity may result in termination of rental assistance.
- Not violate the lease by allowing unauthorized person(s) to reside in their unit. An unauthorized person is one who is not listed on the lease and uses the family's address. Guests are allowed to visit for up to fourteen (14) days per year. Absence of the unit by the family for thirty (30) days or more may result in termination of assistance.
- Pay their security deposit and rent portion upon obtaining possession of the unit.
- Immediately advise the owner of any repairs that are needed in the unit. If the owner will not make an effort to remedy repairs within a reasonable time, the family must notify the Assisted Housing office. The family is financially responsible for any tenant related damages to the unit.
- Keep the unit in a decent, safe and sanitary manner. The family is responsible for maintaining good housekeeping. Utilities must be connected at all times.

Responsibilities of the City of Ashland Assisted Housing Department

The City of Ashland Assisted Housing Department, as the administering agent of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, also has responsibilities.

The Assisted Housing Dept. must:

- Review applications, determine eligibility and issue vouchers.
- Ensure that all participating families are briefed on the specifics of the HCV program.
- Provide technical assistance to families in locating a unit.
- Prepare and execute the HAP contract.
- Ensure that owners are paid HAP in a timely manner on a monthly basis.
- Inspect rental units at least annually in accordance with federal and local guidelines and notify owners and tenants of the results.
- Recertify families annually to re-determine eligibility.
- Administer the HCV program in a fair and equitable manner to all parties concerned. Establish, administer and enforce policies and HUD regulations.